

# SMALL GRANTS AND AMBASSADOR'S FUND PROGRAM (SGAFP)

## ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT:

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

Implemented by: National Rural Support Programme (NRSP)

## I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### I.1. Introduction:

This Annual Summary Report of the USAID Small Grants and Ambassador's Fund Program (SGAFP) has been prepared by the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP)<sup>1</sup> for submission to USAID/Pakistan as per clause F.4.8 of the Contract Modification No.24 and covers the period Year-6 from October 01, 2015 to September 30, 2016.

### I.2. Program Description:

SGAFP is a US \$ 50 million countrywide large cross-cutting grants program that supports the Pakistan based CBOs, NGOs, and private organizations to implement their high impact unique and innovative ideas to address community priority needs in Pakistan. SGAFP has two distinct components: the Small Grants Program and 2) the Ambassador's Fund Program. The **Small Grants component** is designed to provide up to 3 years development oriented awards (of unique and innovative nature) normally not exceeding US \$ 300,000 that are in line with USAID's strategic priorities of development assistance to Pakistan but do not necessarily fit into existing sectoral programs and would in some way contribute to the Mission's overall objectives. The **Ambassador's Fund** articulates the priorities of US Ambassador by supporting community led self-help development initiatives of up to one year through grants normally not exceeding US \$ 75,000.

SGAFP aims to provide approximately 350 grants (100 Small Grants and 250 Ambassador's Fund grants) to Pakistani CBOs, NGOs, CSOs and Private Sector Organizations. The program started on September 01, 2010 and will end<sup>2</sup> on May 31, 2018.

## 2. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### 2.1. Program Level

1. USAID executed Modification No. 24 to the contract on April 15, 2016. This Modification sub-obligated an incremental funding of \$3.7 million to the NRSP-SGAFP. With this incremental funding, the currently obligated amount is \$ 42,685,981<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, the Modification streamlines the deliverables to be achieved by the NRSP-SGAFP in the remaining period of performance and also redefines the pre-award grant processes. Since

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<sup>1</sup> NRSP being the largest nongovernmental support organization with its extensive hands-on experience of organizing more than 185,766 Community Organizations and nation-wide outreach<sup>1</sup> is highly qualified to implement a program of this scale and nature in Pakistan. Under this contract, NRSP is responsible for establishing and tracking management and implementation procedures for the applicants, i.e. receive, log, perform assessments of potential grantees, arrange review of grant proposals, provide recommendation to USAID, monitor performance of grantees, and perform successful close-out of all the grants.

<sup>2</sup> This includes the 9 month no-cost-extension approved through Contract Modification No. 25 on October 24, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Modification No. 25 has incrementally funded the contract by US\$6,500,000 increasing the total obligation from US\$ 42,685,891 to 49,185,981.

April 15, 2016, SGAFP has been complying with all the new requirements stipulated under this modification.

- Year-6 witnessed changes in the priority sectors for both components. The new funding theme of “Let Girls Learn (LGL)” was introduced in October 2015 as part of the “Education Sector” under the Small Grants and became the entire focus of the Education Sector in January 2016. Similarly, the new priority sectors for the Ambassador’s Fund were introduced on January 11, 2016. These changes in the priority sectors represented certain challenges for the NRSP-SGAFP including the orientation of staff to fully grasp the details of these newly introduced sectors for processing of the applications.

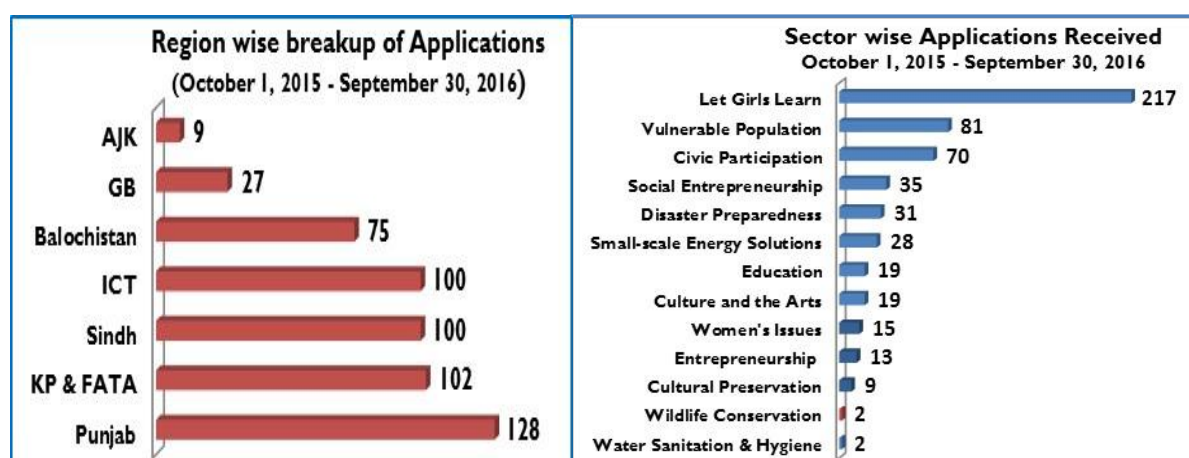
## 2.2. Pre-award Applications Processing

The pre-award stage covers the grant cycle from receiving of applications to evaluation and finally awarding grants. Key achievements of Year-6 pre-award activities are presented below:

- SGAFP received 541 applications (306 under SGP and 235 AFP) from all over Pakistan indicating an average 45 applications per month. SGAFP reviewed these applications to



determine that: 1) applications complied with standard format; 2) proposed interventions fell under USAID’s announced priority sectors; 3) proposed cost didn’t exceed the grant limits; 4) the applicant was eligible for funding; and 5) no other proposal from the applicant was in process at SGAFP. Upon fulfillment of these conditions; the applications were logged into Grant-MIS. SGAFP also issued acknowledgement receipts to all these applicants. Moreover, 221 applications that did not meet these basic conditions were returned to the applicants with indication of gaps in their applications and asking them to reapply if they wish. Cumulatively, SGAFP has received 3,727 applications as per standard format from all across Pakistan and logged them into Grant-MIS. Below graphs present the province and sector wise applications received during the Year-6.



- SGAFP conducted desk review of 450 applications (an average 38/month) and submitted all these applications along with brief analysis/checklists to USAID for seeking USAID’s clearance to further process these applications.

3. USAID reviewed 469 applications including 48 previous applications and cleared 135 for further processing while 334 applications were not considered for further action and 29 applications are still in review process at USAID.
4. SGAFP conducted institutional assessments of the 127 organizations. Cumulatively, 852 organizations have gone through the detailed institutional assessments as part of the pre-award institutional capacity assessments.
5. SGAFP's Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) comprising the senior staff of SGAFP reviewed 146 fully processed grant summaries and recommended 72 cases for award. Cumulatively TEC has reviewed 693 applications since inception of the Program, an average 116 applications per year.
6. SGAFP submitted 147 fully processed grant summaries including 72 for-award recommended cases to USAID. Cumulatively, SGAFP has submitted 425 for-award recommended summaries (126 for SG and 299 for AF).
7. USAID approved 63 new grants of worth US \$ 6.87 million during the Year-6; cumulatively, USAID has approved 296 grants (101 under SGP and 195 under AFP) of worth US\$ 36.08 million. In the Year-6, SGAFP also achieved its tentative target of awarding 100 Small Grants.
8. Overall pre-award stage achievements of the Program since its inception in September 2010 are presented below:



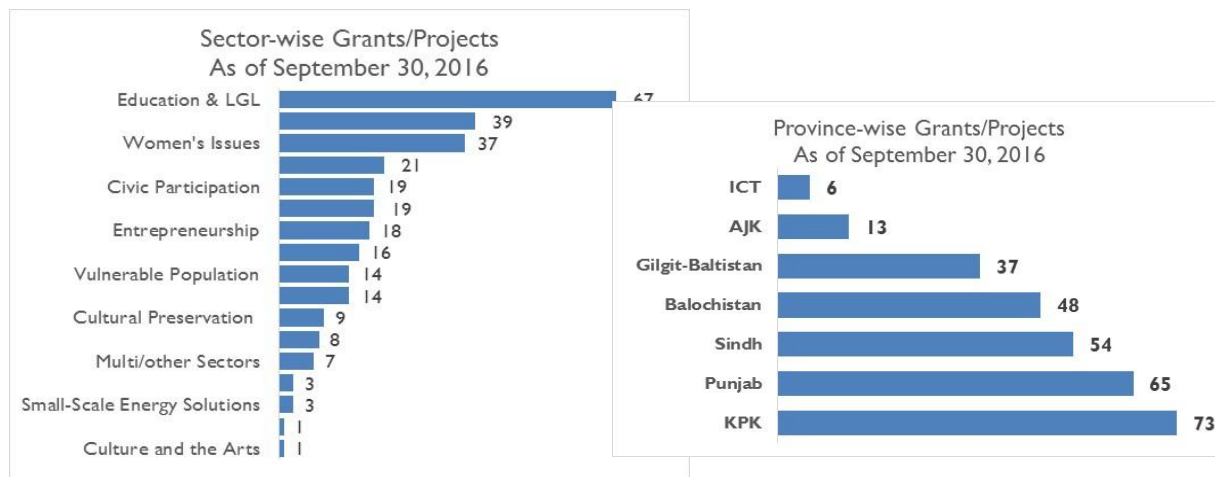
## 2.3. Post-award Grant Implementation

### a) Grants Awarded:

The Year-6 with 74 grants awarded/obligated marked the highest number of grants awarded in one year during the last six years. These 74 grants include 63 grants approved during the year and 11 grants approved in Year-5 but entered into agreement with SGAFP during Year-6. Year-wise number of grants approved and awarded are presented below:

Post-award Activities	Year						
	Year-1	Year-2	Year-3	Year-4	Year-5	Year-6	Total
<b>No. of grants approved</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>296</b>
Small Grants	2	30	15	1	27	26	101
Ambassador's Fund	30	36	21	32	39	37	195
<b>No. of grants awarded</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>279</b>
Small Grants	1	27	16	4	16	33	97
Ambassador's Fund	28	35	24	29	25	41	182

Province-wise trend of project approved since Program inception indicates that maximum projects were approved for KPK (73) followed by Punjab (65) and Sindh (54). Similarly, the sector wise project status indicates that maximum projects were approved for Education and LGL sectors. Below graphs present sector and region wise number of grants approved as of September 30, 2016 under both program components.



## b) Funds Approved, Awarded and Disbursed

During Year-6, USAID approved US\$ 6.87 million for 63 new grants while SGAFP committed US \$ 8.54 million for 74 grants awarded. The disbursement to the grantees remained US\$ 6.61 million. Summary of the cumulative status of the fund approved, awarded, and disbursed since Program inception is presented in the diagram/chart. Year-wise status of funds approved, awarded and disbursed are presented in the below table.

### Summary of Funds approved, awarded and disbursed

Small Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved: US \$ 20.86 million</li> <li>Awarded/Obligated: US \$ 20.29 million</li> <li>Disbursed: US \$ 14.6 million</li> </ul>
Ambassador's Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved: US \$ 15.22 million</li> <li>Awarded/Obligated: US \$ 14.29 million</li> <li>Disbursed: US \$ 11.82 million</li> </ul>
Total SGAFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved: US \$ 36.08 million</li> <li>Awarded/Obligated: US \$ 34.57 million</li> <li>Disbursed: US \$ 25.88 million</li> </ul>

### Year-wise status of Funds approved, awarded and disbursed

Particular	Year						
	Year-1	Year-2	Year-3	Year-4	Year-5	Year-6	Total
<b>Funds Approved (US \$ Million)</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>10.75</b>	<b>5.21</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>7.72</b>	<b>6.87</b>	<b>36.08</b>
Small Grants	0.49	7.14	3.35	0.25	5.08	4.56	20.86
Ambassador's Fund	2.48	3.61	1.86	2.32	2.64	2.31	15.22
<b>Funds Awarded (US \$ Million)</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>6.10</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>4.83</b>	<b>8.54</b>	<b>34.57</b>
Small Grants	0.25	6.30	3.99	0.69	3.02	6.05	20.29
Ambassador's Fund	2.14	3.70	2.11	2.02	1.81	2.49	14.29
<b>Funds Disbursed (US \$ Million)</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>4.64</b>	<b>7.58</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>6.61</b>	<b>25.88</b>
Small Grants	0.04	1.86	4.94	2.35	0.77	4.16	14.60
Ambassador's Fund	1.26	2.78	2.64	1.10	1.64	2.45	11.82

## c) Physical Progress of Awarded Grants

In Year-6, SGAFP initiated 74 new grants (33SG & 41AF) and completed 51 grants (8SG & 43AF). Cumulatively, of the 296 approved grants; 199 grants/projects (67% of the total) stands completed/closed; 80 grants are at various stages of implementation; while grant agreement of 17 recently approved grants are in process. The region-wise trend of projects indicates that

Province/ Region	No. of grants closed/ completed	No. of On-going grant	No of grant agreement in process	Total No. of approved Grants
AJK	9	4	-	13
Balochistan	37	10	1	48
Gilgit-Baltistan	21	12	4	37
ICT	5	1	-	6
KPK/FATA	57	14	2	73
Punjab	40	21	4	65
Sindh	30	18	6	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>296</b>

maximum projects have been awarded and completed in KPK/FATA followed by Punjab and Sindh. Similarly, maximum grants have been completed for economic growth followed by Education & LGL and women issues. In terms of on-going grants, maximum grants fall under the Education & LGL theme followed by Civic Participation and Women Issues. Sector-wise grants completed, on-going and agreement in process are presented below:

Province/ Region	No. of grants closed/ completed	No. of On-going grant	No of grant agreement in process	Total No. of approved Grants
Civic Participation	3	15	1	19
Cultural Preservation	5	4	-	9
Culture and the Arts	-	-	1	1
Disaster Preparedness	-	-	3	3
Economic Growth	39	-	-	39
Education & LGL	37	27	3	67
Energy	19	-	-	19
Entrepreneurship	10	8	-	18
Flood/Social Assistance	14	-	-	14
Health	21	-	-	21
Multi/other Sectors	7	-	-	7
Small-Scale Energy Solutions	-	1	2	3
Social Entrepreneurship	-	-	1	1
Vulnerable Population	3	5	6	14
Water & Sanitation	6	2	-	8
Wildlife Conservation	12	4	-	16
Women's Issues	23	14	-	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>296</b>

#### d) Grant Implementation Support and Oversight:

The post award phase for each grant entails a significant amount of work over the life of grant project and SGAFP follows a multifaceted integrated approach for handholding and facilitation of grantees in implementing the grant, monitoring, ensuring effective and efficient utilization of funds in line with set objectives and stipulated milestones for release of tranches, reporting progress, documentation, compliance of branding/marketing requirements and completing the closeout formalities.

SGAFP has a dedicated Implementation Unit (IU) that plays a central role within SGAFP vis-à-vis post award grant implementation and acts as a frontline for grant implementation and oversight. The IU supports and assists the grantees for resolving grant specific issues, coordination with



the stakeholders, release of grant funds, concurrence of the grant project staff recruitment, facilitation for budget realignment, and no cost project period extension.

During Year-6, the IU assisted 45 grantee organizations for resolving issues/conflicts while implementing the grant activities; facilitated 38 grants for budget realignment on request by the grantees at a certain stage of implementation; held compliance review meetings with all completed grants; and supported 15 grantees through no cost extension of grant period enabling them to manage all the planned activities. The work of Implementation Unit is complemented by various units of SGAFP.

SGAFP's provincial teams and central office staff regularly visit the grants sites. During the Year-6, SGAFP staff made 1,250 person-visits to 124 organizations; an average 100 visits per month and each active grant is visited 10 times in a year either by the central office team or provincial team.

#### **e) Environmental Impacts**

Under the SGAFP environmental review process introduced as per its final IEE Amendment No. 2, SGAFP does due diligences at the pre and post grant award stages to ensure compliance with USAID's environmental guidelines by identifying the potential effects -positive or negative- that a project or activity may have on the environment. The applicants are required to complete & submit an Environmental Documentation Form (EDF) at the time of submission of application. These EDF forms are verified and cross checked by SGAFP: a) while conducting Institutional Assessment for new applicants; and b) prior to release of 1st tranche to the new grantees. Based on the review of EDF, grantees are required to prepare and submit the EMMP. SGAFP makes sure that items associated with all environmental concerns are taken into account and mitigation measures are identified for compliance.

The environmental screening of the SGAFP funded grants based on the nature of activities being undertaken in these grants indicates that: a) 69% (205 out of 296 approved grants) of the grants/projects fall under the category of "**Categorical Exclusion**" as they involve capacity building, training, research, non-formal education, policy advocacy, and provision of health services to the marginalized segments of the society. Therefore, in view of nature and scope of the projects, such projects are excluded for detailed environmental checklist; b) 5% (15 out of 296 approved grants) of the grants/projects got "**Exempted**" because these were designed for provision of emergency services to the flood affected areas during 2010-11; and c) 26% (76 out of 296 approved grants) of the funded grants/project have been identified with "**Negative Determination with Conditions**" on environment. The projects identified with possible negative impacts on the environment went through detailed screening that involved preparation of checklists, mitigation plans, and monthly monitoring of these plans.

#### **f) Progress Reporting**

SGAFP has ensured timely submission of all contractual reports and special reports as and when required by the USAID. The formal reports periodically submitted to USAID include the fortnightly reports, monthly progress reports, quarterly progress reports, reporting on PakInfo website. The Year-6 witnessed increased demands from USAID for special reports and updates on various aspects of the Program. Moreover, SGAFP prepared and submitted the Work-Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to USAID. The Work-Plan stands approved by USAID.

#### **g) Gender Integration through Grants**

SGAFP, in consultation with USAID, took affirmative strategic actions for promotion of gender equality and later translated these decisions into letter and spirit. The precise description below

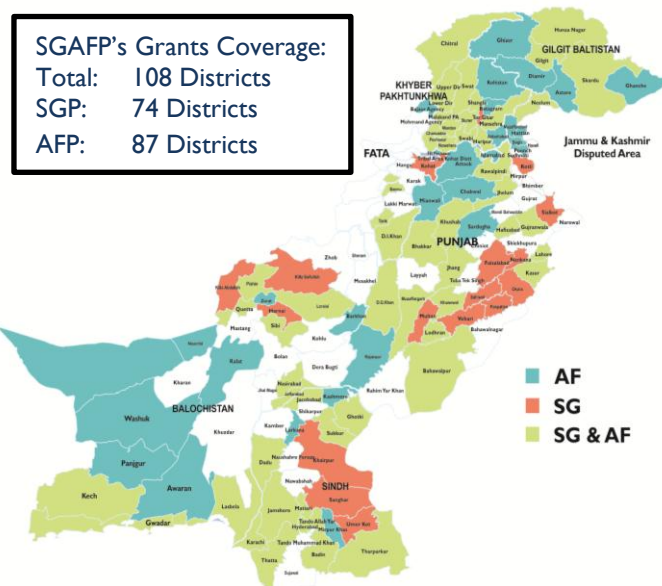
covers the salient policy decisions that lead SGAFP towards gender equity through grants management:

- SGAFP, on its website, announced “gender” as a cross cutting theme, further encouraging the applicant organizations for submission of a gender sensitive proposal. Moreover, guidelines for the applicants exhibited through website explicitly defines points weightage for those proposals that include both women and men in development projects;
- SGAFP’s grant processing team through a series of meetings got thorough orientation on how to review the proposal from gender lens and also briefs the applicants how the proposed intervention can either equally benefit both women and men, or can benefit only those who are more deprived to address the existing gaps in a particular scenario;
- Technical Evaluation Committee in final review of the application when presented by the Grant Officers, makes sure that gender component is embedded to the possible extent, and also reflects the same while marking the scoring sheet;
- As per guidelines, women must be part of implementation committee to be formed by the grantee organizations, so that they can raise voice in all important decisions during execution of the grant; and
- Among beneficiaries of the grant, women ratio must be above 35% of the total beneficiaries; in case if it seems difficult in the local context, the grantee is supposed to justify the reasoning for not reaching the women.

## 2.4. Outreach, Publicizing and Security

### a) Geographical Outreach

SGAFP received applications across the country from 136 districts that covers 99% of the total 138 districts of Pakistan. Responding to the received applications, SGAFP awarded 296 grants to serve the marginalized communities in 108 districts of Pakistan. A Summary of province-wise districts covered for receiving of applications and approved projects is presented below:



	Baloch- istan	Sindh	Punja b	KPK	FAT A	AJK	GB	ICT	Total
Total Districts in Region	30	23	36	24	7	10	7	1	138
No. of districts from where applications received	29	23	36	24	6	10	7	1	136
No. of district from where application approved	22	19	27	24	1	7	7	1	108
No. of Approved projects	48	54	65	72	1	13	37	6	296

## b) Visibility and Media Events



On August 18, 2016, NRSP-SGAFP organized an event in Lahore to showcase its achievements in Punjab Province. In addition to USAID officials, more than 100 representatives from grantee organizations, donor agencies, the provincial government and media attended the event. The event was divided into two parts: the first parts highlighted the overall achievements of SGAFP especially in Punjab province and ended with grant-signing ceremony of three new grant projects in Punjab; while in the second half, Ms. Deborah Robinson, the Acting Consul General Lahore, had an informal interaction with the representative of grantees who shared their experiences of grant implementation and challenges faced during the process. The Provincial Minister for Population Welfare

Mrs. Zakia Shah Nawaz Khan was the Chief Guest and she appreciated the role and contributions of NGOs in the development process and especially lauded the efforts of USAID and NRSP in complementing the development agenda of the government of Punjab. The event attracted significant publicity and media coverage.



### Experience Sharing and Learning Works with Grantees

SGAFP arranged two one-day experience sharing and learning workshops at Hyderabad Sindh and Quetta, Balochistan. These workshops provided opportunities for capacity building, networking, and exchange of experiences among the SGAFP's Grantees as well as interact with senior management of SGAFP to share their concerns and suggestions related to SGAFP grants. SGAFP shared an overview of the Program, priority areas and funding opportunity for the CBOs, NGOs and grassroots organizations.

### SGAFP Team Building:

Year-6 marked the focus of SGAFP management on promoting team building among SGAFP staff through various initiatives including the NRSP supported cash prizes for exceptionally performing team players and annual staff retreat to discuss SGAFP's accomplishments and implementation challenges; procedural changes in the pre-award application processing and new reporting requirements under the Contract



Modification No.24; ineligible and restricted activities for SGAFP grants; work plan and the roles and responsibilities of each section in the light of possible 09 month extension of the Program; areas for improvements in the next two years; possible future directions; and some team building activities to further strengthen the team work at SGAFP.

Overall, these initiatives were useful to improve staff coordination, review the overall performance of SGAFP, and reflect on the challenges, future direction and necessary adjustments to meet targets in the remaining period of performance.



### c) **Safety and Security Works**

The “Diligence Management Consultants (DMC)” oversees the development of security systems for the protection of facilities, personnel, and assets and issues directives in complex security environments. During the Year-6, the DMC mainly handled the tasks including: 1) submission of daily tracking report on location of field staff; 2) supervision of Security Guards and vehicle movement; 3) compilation of weekly security and safety incident reports; 4) monitoring of access control procedures; 5) issuance of travel security advices to SGAFP staff moving to field areas; 6) assessment of security risk of the locations proposed by the applicants, and 7) coordination with USAID as and when required.

## **3. PROGRAM SUCCESSES**

### **3.1. Results and illustrative interventions:**

The SGAFP’s experiences of managing countrywide located 296 grants of worth US \$ 36.08 million presents a profound purview of managing the diversities of inspiring development initiatives in Pakistan. These diversities are found in the geographical landscape, thematic areas, funding sizes, project duration, capacities of grantee organization, and socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries. The countrywide geographical spread of these 296 grants starting from spectacular snow-capped mountains in the north to sunny coastal areas of the Arabian Sea in the south through the rain fed and canal irrigated fields and deserts with sand dunes coupled with highly uneven distributed population in various parts of the country speaks volumes of geographical diversity handled by SGAFP through this program. Managing these grants in a highly diversified USAID declared funding sectors, themes, and priorities starting from provision of basic needs of education, health, and energy to the long term ambitions for better governance and gender equity, from immediate relief services to the flood affected communities to long lasting preservation of cultural heritage and wildlife conservation, measures for economic growth and livelihoods through rehabilitation of water sources to enterprise development to revival of endangered local languages and culture are among the notable traits of SGAFP grants.

SGAFP with footprints in 108 districts has approved 296 grants of worth \$36 million to improve the quality of life for over 1.74 million people from 875,000 households, out of which about one million (55%) are women and girls, throughout Pakistan. The program supports high impact innovative initiatives by Pakistani civil society organizations across the country. Key achievements are:

- ✓ 67 grants under Education and Let Girls Learn themes have helped build teachers' skills, establish libraries, and build infrastructure.
- ✓ 15 civic participation initiatives have supported research, use of technology to ensure transparency in public service delivery, increased citizens’ engagement, supported human rights and women’s empowerment.
- ✓ 39 projects under Economic Growth theme have built farmers’ skills, provided vocational training, and helped revive the tradition of handloom weaving.
- ✓ 19 energy sector grants have helped support renewable energy solutions through small-scale sustainable projects across Pakistan.
- ✓ 21 health sector projects have helped establish health centers, train midwives, and sensitize communities in basic health and hygiene practices.
- ✓ 37 projects under Women's Issues theme have benefited over 160,000 women by equipping them with skills, creating job opportunities, introducing a mechanism to address domestic violence issues, and increasing women's access to justice.

- ✓ 10 cultural preservation grants have supported preserving endangered languages, highlighting ancient architectural and musical heritage, digital preservation of six heritage sites, documentaries on the Lahore Fort, Shalimar Gardens and Taxila, and revival of traditional music and skills.
- ✓ 16 Wildlife Conservation projects have supported wildlife conservation by providing facilities for education, research, and habitat conservation for threatened species. Efforts have been aimed at saving peafowls and the endangered blind dolphins of River Indus.
- ✓ 14 Flood/Social Assistance projects have extended substantial relief services by constructing houses, distributing agri-inputs to the farmers and rehabilitating the damaged bridges/link roads.
- ✓ 18 Entrepreneurship grants have helped establish economic enterprise through imparting marketable vocational skills to women, distribution sewing/embroidering machines/handlooms, building capacity of farmers/fishermen, and also exert efforts for promotion of social enterprise.
- ✓ 8 Water & Sanitation grants have enabled the selected communities to access drinking water and sanitation through provision of bio-sand/ceramic water filters, installation of communal hand pumps, construction of toilets and wash facilities in the schools.
- ✓ 7 recently approved projects revolve around supporting vulnerable households through providing them with an opportunity for vocational skills enhancement combined with distribution of tool kits.

SGAFP is touching and transforming the lives of underprivileged communities, empowering them through their participation in the local decision making processes, fostering the culture of transparency and accountability in project implementation, and building institutional capacity of local NGOs. SGAFP due to its magnificent outreach is one of the most effective tools to showcase the generous support of US Citizens and US Government to the Pakistan through funding numerous community driven self-help projects throughout the country and, therefore, has helped in improving the soft image of the Government and people of the USA.

## **4. CHALLENGES/LESSONS LEARNT / WAY AHEAD**

### **4.1. Issues/Challenges:**

#### **A. Issues/Challenges successfully resolved:**

1. Since inception, SGAFP has handled about 4000 applications from all over Pakistan. Most of these applications were of poor quality owing to weak capacities of the grassroots level organizations. Even potential project proposals from relatively mature organizations called for immense inputs and handholding efforts of SGAFP's staff in order to address various gaps. SGAFP managed this challenge by strengthening its existing grant processing team with additional human resource.
2. Change in priority sectors took time to orient staff and potential organizations to fully grasp the requirements for proposals. SGAFP conducted extensive literature reviews about these new priority sectors.
3. Considering the remaining period of performance, awarding large size grants for less than 12 months in view of low capacity of the grantees to consume \$30,000- 40,000 per quarter could cause high risks for transparent utilization of funds. To meet this challenge and achieve targets, SGAFP reduced the grant size and duration to ensure quick implementations of grants.
4. In view of the remaining period for processing of applications, SGAFP flagged the issue of processing non-award summaries that required significant time and efforts of the processing

team. SGAFP's experience and historical trend showed that around 55% of the GRC cleared cases turned out to be non-award, mainly due to extremely poor capacity of applicants and it was quite challenging to produce such a large number of non-award summaries at this stage of the program. SGAFP raised this issue with USAID and finally USAID waived off the obligation of submission of non-award summaries and replaced it with a brisk analysis that requires less time and efforts as compared to previous practice of preparing full non-award recommended summary.

#### 4.2. Lessons Learnt:

- ✓ The limited capacity of CBOs & NGOs called for extensive assistance to be extended from SGAFP in the post-award/implementation stages to comply with USAID's requirements, particularly with regards to documentation, branding/marketing, maintaining quality of deliverables/milestones and operational transparency;
- ✓ The wider geographical outreach imposes certain financial implications on the program and demands prudent allocation of operational budget keeping in view the cost associated with the optimum number of grants to be delivered in various regions across the country.
- ✓ While working with the various types of organizations including small scale community based organizations, local support organizations working at grassroots level and national and international organizations, grant implementation issues also vary in nature. Small scale organizations usually lack capacity in grant execution, whereas the bigger NGOs with substantial organizational capacity prefer to follow their own policies in case of witnessing conflict with the donor's procedural protocols for the grants.
- ✓ Field monitoring of the grants in climatically tough and remote terrains may demand some additional arrangements such as involvement of a third party already based in the field area or through establishing some meaningful evidences of the activities like sharing of pictures, videos, skype etc.
- ✓ The communities located in the remote regions deserve development initiatives even more because generally such areas do not fall under the geographical priorities set by many of the donors on account of implementation and budgetary constraints.
- ✓ While managing sectoral diversity, it becomes inevitable for the team to develop sound understanding and expertise on various thematic areas, enabling them to better process the application with inbuilt essential features as pre-requisites for each particular theme.
- ✓ Development needs of the individuals belonging to different age groups also vary from each other e.g. children mostly need education and health related services, whereas the youth group seems more enthusiastic towards skills development and entrepreneurship, but the old usually ask for shelter and other amenities of life or looking for opportunity to transfer their precious cultural heritage to the young generation.
- ✓ A grant program in general kicks off with prime concentration on reaching out to the potential applicants, and receiving and processing of applications but later on approval of grants, implementation and compliance of diverse grants portfolio appeared as even more worthwhile requiring dedicated professionals and allocation of resources with a mandate to deal with implementation challenges of ongoing grants.